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American Teacher

Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy

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National Defense

DEFEND the Child against lifeless and outworn Courses of Study

DEFEND our Schools against the Domination of Schemers and Exploiters

DEFEND the Interests of the Children threatened by short-sighted "Economy" and "Efficiency"

DEFEND our Right to Recognition as Men and Women, not as mere Automaton

DEFEND our Right to a Hearing on all Matters that concern the Schools.

Let us train up a body of thinking men and women to form

AN ARMY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
AGAINST IGNORANCE, PASSION,
GREED and INJUSTICE.

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THE NEW EDUCATION*

SCOTT NEARING

Dean, School of Economics, Toledo University

THE EDUCATIONAL question is peculiarly significant, because out of education comes citizenship, and on citizenship rests democracy. As we educate people, so we develop this or that type of citizenship. We ought to be prepared to do some thinking about education, to have some kind of educational standards that will enable us to think about education in a sane way.

Let us suppose that we were constituted a committee to build up a school system; suppose that the educational authorities should say to us: Sit down at this table and work out a system of education for the city of New York, Montclair, Newark, or for any other place. How would we go about it?

In the first place we would have to find out the fundamental things that we need educationally, and that involves a distinction that we must make between two ideals in the educational world. The first ideal I shall call the *old education*, and the second one the *new education*. The old ideal assumed that certain things constituted education—Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Natural Science, Philosophy, and a little History. These things were education. I have seen a high school flunk out half the boys who came to it because they couldn't do Latin, on the theory that the boy who couldn't do Latin couldn't be educated. The boy isn't promoted if he fails in Latin and we make him stay down in the first year of high school year after year till he does pass it. Of course, those of you in modern high schools think this sounds archaic; it isn't so old in years as you may imagine; it is far more modern in years than it is in doctrine. The old educational world set up a certain standard and said, This is Education: if you can get it

you can be educated, if you can't get it you can't be educated.

People assumed that the sons of gentlemen (it is only recently the daughters have been receiving educations) could be educated; the sons of the rest of the world could not. We had that very narrow idea of what education meant.

The other way—the new way—to look at education is to say, here are a thousand children of varying ages, different colored hair, different length legs and arms, different size heads, different psychologically, physically and every other way—a thousand different children. What do those thousand children need? What must they get from the school—between the ages of six and sixteen, let us say—if they are to live what Herbert Spencer called the complete life?

Whatever the thousand children need, that is the new education.

As one of the most successful high school principals in the community said, "If I find that so many children are having difficulty in their first term work in high school, there's something the matter with the high school." That is the fundamental issue between the formalist in education and the pragmatist in education, who makes his education fit in with the things the child needs.

In Cincinnati, Ohio, we have perhaps the greatest city educational system in the United States, which Superintendent Dyer has brot to a very high point of proficiency by saying to the principal of the school up on the hill, "Brooks, that's your school; now I want you to study your community, and then I want you to fit the course of study to the community." Imagine a man in his right senses saying that! Just imagine a school superintendent of a city school telling a principal to fit the course of study to his community! Imagine taking a course of study, smashing it up and scattering it around, and telling your principals to

*From address delivered in New York, 1 December, 1915, under auspices of The Rand School of Social Science.

make the course of study fit the community! But to another principal down in a factory district, where most of the children were compelled to leave school at fourteen and go to work, where practically none went to high school, Superintendent Dyer said, "Now, Voorhees, fit the course of study to your community." So Mr. Brooks put manual training in the sixth grade and Mr. Voorhees put it in the second grade. Mr. Brooks put domestic science in the sixth, Mr. Voorhees in the second. They modified the work of their schools to meet the needs of the children, and further, Mr. Brooks and Mr. Voorhees said to the teachers, "Study your children and make the work fit the needs of your children."

Most school teachers and superintendents have never thought of this point. The old formal idea was that the teacher is paid to teach history, arithmetic and geography: the new idea is that he is paid to teach children. But if you are going to teach children you have to start with the children and work from the children up. And that is the basic *thot* behind our work for the new education.

Education must be education for the community, for the children in the community primarily, shaped in terms of the needs that exist, whatever they are. It doesn't make any difference what they are; you may not like the needs; they may not jibe with your theories. Then the sooner you scrap your theories and get some new ones, the better for you and the theories. The purpose of schools is to meet the needs of boys and girls from six to sixteen, or sixteen to twenty, whatever the age may be.

In the past we assumed that a boy was a miniature man, and being smaller than a man, would be interested in smaller units. So, if a man was interested in reading, for instance, "I see a cat," why a boy, being a miniature man, would be interested in getting up and saying, "*I-eye ess-ee-ee SEE A see a tee CAT.*" For years spelling was of prime educational importance. Of course those of you who studied spelling know that it is no more interesting to a boy than to a man, no

more interesting to a girl than to a woman.

But a boy is not a small imitation of a man; a boy is a boy. Recent investigations have shown that a boy lives in his world more honestly and more completely than man lives in his. There is less sham, less make-believe, more honest self-expression in the boy's life than in the man's. Educators must discover what kind of a life children are living, before they can fit the school machinery to the need of the children. That involves *thot*, and, in the first place, involves intelligence on the part of the educator, and some of you know what a presumptuous assumption that sometimes is.

The most patent and obvious fact about a child is that he is a creature growing physically, mentally, spiritually. If you think about him a little more you realize that he has to live as a citizen, in a community. He has to be a member of a family when he is a child, and later on when he is older will organize his own family and be a member of a larger neighborhood, that he will have to *live with other people*. First there is growth, then there is association, and third, there is vocation. The child *must make a living*.

These are the three primary needs of the child: growth, association, and vocation. Some time take a pencil and paper and figure it out; you can group all of the needs of children under growth, association, and vocation: they grow up, live with other people, do useful work of some kind. These are the fundamental, principal facts about children.

Now, we come from an era when we were taught that the way to save the soul was to mortify the body; that the body was a temptation sent from the devil; that the human impulses and passions were bad. And so we have always done our best, under that tradition, to ignore the fact that we had bodies. But none of us can ever escape the fact that we have bodies, that we live with them, and use them in whatever work we do in life, whether we do it with a pen or a pick. We must train the bodies of the

children to do the work that is to be done. We may not like it, it may offend our finer sensibilities; but it's a fact. If we are going to minister to the needs of the child, the duty of the school is to see that his body grows up a good body, a well-fed, well-set-up, effective, efficient body; something that he can use later on in life, in school. That is the first principle in education.

What does that mean in terms of life? Why here is a boy of six; the muscles in his back and legs are stretching out, growing, we say he is shooting up; that means he is developing bigger muscles. Nature says to that boy—*Sprawl!* Children of six do not sprawl because they deliberately want to dirty their clothes and tear stockings, or to make work for older people; they do these things because nature says, *Sprawl*. What do we say? We say, There's a bench with a back 90°; sit on that bench and study. We are directly contradicting nature: nature says, *Sprawl*; we say, *sit at a right angle for four, five or six hours a day and study*.

The school is responsible for seeing that the boys and girls who go thru them have sound bodies first. In a number of our schools they have open-air classes—and the results have been perfectly marvelous, increasing the physical well-being and mental happiness, a perfectly marvelous effect. In one of the towns they said, "We can't have these open air classes, besides it costs too much." The teachers settled the question—brot their wraps and kept the windows open. There was one universal complaint against the scheme: the children were so happy mentally, did their work so rapidly they got thru the prescribed amount the course of study required. Then there was nothing left to do, so they got into mischief; therefore they closed the windows.

In nine schools out of ten we haven't begun to treat the child as a physical human being. In Gary, for instance, they take the child, for certain classes of work, from school to playground. They work in the playground, work in the shops, have a chance to develop physically, to sprawl. The consequence is they are be-

ginning to develop something that resembles education.

Turn now to the second kind of growth, mental growth. That is the place where the school *has* devoted its attention, trained the children mentally, given them various kinds of mental discipline. Take mathematics; we have all taught mathematics. Only very recently I was in a school where the children were reciting in mental arithmetic; they sat on benches, put their mental arithmetics on their desks and folded their hands. The teacher said, "Mary, if John has five red apples and William has four yellow ones, how many apples have John and William together?" Mary gets up: "If John has five red apples and William has four yellow ones, how many apples have John and William together? If John has five red apples and William has four yellow apples, then John and William together have the sum of five plus four apples or nine apples. Therefore if John has five red apples and William four yellow apples, together they have—" etc., etc. Mary sits down. They had studied the problems at home; they all knew the answer: the trick was to be sufficiently glib to get past without a slip. If you didn't the teacher said "sit down—next!" What is the purpose of mental arithmetic? Its purpose is not to give a glib tongue, but a quality of mind, to use our minds quickly without the use of our tongues.

Turn next to the question of history: what do you know about American history? You know 1492—that was the year Columbus discovered America; 1776 was the year the Declaration of Independence was signed; in 1812 there was a war; there was another in 1861; George Washington was the first president of the United States—all very nice things to know. But they can't make the least difference: Columbus might have discovered America in 1493, the Declaration might have been signed on the sixth of July; the War of 1812 might have started in 1811 or 1813, the Civil War in 1860; it makes no difference. I remember the number of tears I shed and the hours I spent learning the battles of the

Mexican War. I have since forgotten them.

History is a record of the lives, the social relations and economic development of the people who live in the United States: we didn't discuss that at all. We learned the names of the president, and the dates of battles.

What is the purpose of language? Why do we have that study? I suppose, to be able to read and speak and write language, to know and appreciate ideas that have been presented, to register our own ideas and impressions. What do we teach? I remember going thru the *Lady of the Lake*, vivisectioning it, cutting it up with nouns, pronouns, clauses, phrases, putting them on the board. I am sure the *Lady of the Lake* may be a very beautiful work of art: I shall never read it again.

The third element in growth is spiritual growth. Civilization consists in building up an economic and social structure that will relieve men and women of the grosser, harsher forms of the livelihood struggle, and will give them leisure and opportunity for the beauty and the finer spiritual things of life. That is what civilization means according to our definition, and yet what do we do with civilization in our public schools? How many children who go to public school come out with an appreciation of beauty, with an appreciation of the wonder, or hunger for truth, for scholarship, the creation of truth, the description, discovery, propagation of truth consuming love of truth, passion for truth? Spiritually, the schools should send out the children with a love of beauty as well as of truth. We turn our schools over to women almost exclusively, to young women almost exclusively. In Philadelphia the average is twenty. With all due respect to her admirable qualities, what does a girl of twenty know of life? Yet we turn over forty or forty-five children to her at twenty, and expect her to impart to them spiritual things. But she hasn't any herself, she is not far enough in life for spiritual valuation. The one group in a community really fit to teach children are mothers who have successfully brot

up families. That should be a diploma—the successful rearing of a family. Take the girl who starts in at twenty—she doesn't know herself; she needs some teaching herself. We can't teach spiritual things unless we have teachers who have learned the forces in life, who have gone thru and have had experience in working things out. The best diploma for teaching in elementary schools should be successful motherhood, the only rational test of ability to impart those things that count for so much in the making of character.

I said that the child had subsequently to live in a community, and to be associated with human beings. What does that mean? In the first place, he has to make a home—to be a father, the girl to be a mother; a great majority of people marry and have children. The school has got to train children for motherhood and fatherhood; that's part of its job. Who is it that is competent to teach children the essentials of motherhood and fatherhood? Not the twenty-year-old immature girl.

The women teaching in schools, teaching civics, are not even citizens, they can't even vote; they have no authority, no right to go to the polls. Yet we assume they can train our boys to be good citizens. Absurd! Don't you see, insofar as our civic relations go, we have got to have people qualified civically, before we can expect effective civic teaching?

Of course we all think a child of twelve or thirteen is pretty much of a dum-head anyway; doesn't know anything. I have seen good civics teachers take classes of children in their twelfth or thirteenth year, and have them debate Immigration, Suffrage, Socialism and other current questions of the day. They go home and pester their parents, find out what their parents don't know—stimulate the parents to learn with the children and to take a deeper interest in things. Just last week I had the pleasure of talking to a girls' school in New York; the girls in the school were all working girls. I have had few audiences that gave better or more intelligent attention; they were twelve, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen.

Yet they knew what I was talking about and were vitally interested in these questions. I have no doubt if we handled the thing right we could put civics into the eighth, seventh and sixth grades for the children, so that when they got out they would be able to take up public questions and handle them intelligently.

In many cities, for the first time, they are opening the schools for discussion, and public gatherings. If our democracy is going to succeed, the older people have to go to school to one another and discuss public questions.

It is as much the duty of the school to train children vocationally as to train them for citizenship, as it is to train them physically, or in mental and spiritual growth. All are parts of the work of the school.

That means that the school has got to start with the assumption that the purpose of education is to meet the needs of the child, the needs of the community; that is the basic work of the school, mental, physical and spiritual growth—growth, association, vocation. That is the basic work of the school, and the school is a successful school only as it turns out children who are well-fitted to cope with the world in which they live. The work of the school is measured by growth, association, vocation. If it helps the children in these directions it is good; if it doesn't it is bad. Only as we make the educational system train the children and develop the community shall we have a new education that is effective and worth striving for.

TEACHERS ON BOARDS OF EDUCATION

BENJAMIN MORRISON

IN AN ADDRESS before the High School Teachers' Association of New York City, on the proposed reorganization of educational administration in cities, Dr. Thomas E. Finnegan, Deputy Commissioner of Education of New York State, declared himself in favor of a small unpaid board of education elected by the people at a special election, but he opposed a professional board.

Students of education and the public generally, anxious for a reorganization of educational administration that would make our system more like the democracy we approach in our political life and less like the autocracy we have in the industrial field, have begun to realize the necessity of having teachers on boards of education. It has been felt that boards of education consisting of men successful in professions other than teaching and in commercial and industrial undertaking are an anomaly. It is finally being recognized that appointment to a board of education by a mayor is no guarantee of ability to plan and administer educational policies.

How does Dr. Finnegan defend his

opposition to having teachers on the board? It is unfortunate that he did not go into the question more fully. He took time merely to say that if boards of education were composed of teachers, they would be inclined to oppose recommendations that would come from teachers because of professional jealousy—the board being anxious to show its superiority; and so progress in education would be impeded. When asked if he favored one member of the small board being a teacher, he again registered his opposition; this time saying that it is unnecessary.

Leaving aside for the time being the question as to whether it is desirable to have a board consisting entirely of teachers, let us consider whether it is unnecessary to have teachers on the boards of education.

The present system of educational administration makes absolutely no provision for turning to the advantage of the school system the experience of the teachers. Initiative is discouraged and suppressed. Such a system, it is clear, is wholly inimical to the welfare of the

boys and girls, as well as of the teachers. It is very much like the mediæval guilds that destroyed any product not made according to the guild regulations, even tho the process was better and the product better. To carry out successfully such complex and intricate plans as are involved in the education of growing children requires not only making use of the experience of the teachers, but also securing their intelligent coöperation. Such coöperation cannot be achieved by the method usually employed. This consists of the principal calling together "his" teachers in a conference, handing out some mimeographed sheets containing certain directions, and ordering them to obey "the following rules and instructions." Is it reasonable to believe that a self-respecting human being really does his best under such conditions?

Even in the army, where the twin gods of discipline and obedience rule supreme, it is recognized that it is not sufficient merely to order a soldier to do this or that, and have him obey unquestioningly, in order to secure the most efficient soldier. The much execrated General Bernhardt in one of his numerous books pointed out the superiority of an intelligently trained army, where the soldier is capable of using initiative in an emergency over an army able merely to carry out orders, and able to do nothing when no one is present to give orders. Teachers, however, who are continually in positions where initiative is necessary, often the safety of children depending upon them, are rated on their "ability to comprehend instructions," but no rating is provided for "originality displayed in teaching or in class room management." Only by allowing teachers a direct share in the management of the schools can any such originality or initiative be developed; only in this manner can the fullest possible use be made of the experience of the teachers, and their intelligent coöperation secured. The first step in this direction should be made by allowing teachers representation on boards of education.

Let us take a concrete case illustrating these principles. The principal of one

of the large high schools of New York City where the coöperative system as worked out by Dean Schneider is being tried stated in a conference with the teachers that he found many of the boys who had entered into the coöperative group were being "failed" in their studies because of the evident lack of sympathy or of understanding on the part of the teachers for the plan itself. He went on to say that the system had been introduced without consulting with him as to its practicability or wisdom. He had been asked by the Board of Superintendents to put the plan into operation after they had adopted it. That was the first he knew about it. While he has given it his sympathetic encouragement, several snags have been struck which might have been avoided had use been made of the principal's experience. "I have not had a chance to object but once, when I was invited to appear before the Superintendents, but the same mail recalled the invitation."

During the past year a number of important experiments affecting the schools, in addition to the coöperative plan, have been under discussion. The Gary system and the Ettinger plan are being tried out in several schools. Both seem to promise to decrease the congestion at present existing in the schools, in addition to enriching the course of study and relating school more closely to life. Both have many enthusiastic advocates—and just as many enthusiastic opponents. So far as is known, the teachers, who are presumed to have some experience in educational matters, enabling them therefore to help determine whether either system or both can really be expected to do what is claimed for them, have in no case been consulted. Newspaper editors, uplift workers and others have argued for and against. The teachers evidently are expected like a drove of cattle to stand by until a conclusion is reached, and then be given their orders. Upon the teachers to a great degree depends the success of whatever experiment is adopted. Do not the interests of the children require that the teachers' experience be taken into ac-

count? Is the present method a wise one?

The representation of teachers on boards of educations is necessary also for their own protection. It is foolish to argue that teachers can safely leave that in the hands of the public-spirited men on the board. No group of workers can expect its interests to be protected except by its own efforts. The School Board in Chicago has taught the teachers there this one lesson, if nothing else. In our own city we need only recall the determined and persistent attempts of the Controller and his expert assistant to lengthen the school day, and deprive the teacher of his iniquitous vacation. Wholly apart from the question as to whether the school year should be lengthened or not, the teachers who are concerned in this matter should be consulted. Would any corporation whose workers are well organized seriously consider the lengthening of the work day without calling a conference of the men? The Board of Education, so far as is known, has not taken any determined stand against such unwarranted increase of the teachers' work without a commensurate increase in salary. The representation of teachers on boards of education would serve to protect teachers against such injustice.

Many teachers who formerly would have objected to any comparison between themselves and the workers in industry have of late begun to see the light. Those who formerly regarded themselves as living in some sort of rarified atmosphere where such things as laborers have no existence, are now to be found discoursing at length on the advantages of labor unions, and the necessity of representation on boards of education. Even in staid old Washington there is at present a questionnaire in the hands of the teachers asking them whether they favor a teachers' union affiliated with the local Federation of Labor.

Mr. Frank P. Walsh, Chairman of the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations, who spent two years investigating the conditions existing in the indus-

trial world, at the close of a meeting of the Labor Forum a few weeks ago, gave it as his opinion that no workers stood in greater need of organization to prevent exploitation than teachers. He favored giving them, as to the workers in the industries, a compelling voice in the administration of the schools. Such a voice can be given teachers only by allowing them representation on boards of education.

The most satisfactory answer to the question we have set ourselves is perhaps given by Prof. E. P. Cubberley of Leland Stanford University, quoted in the October AMERICAN TEACHER. He asked whether a lay board would be allowed to manage a municipal hospital, having charge of medical treatment, doctors, nurses, sanitary work, operative cases, and children's diseases. Can we imagine such a board being allowed to exercise the control over details of management that school boards exercise over schools? "Should they attempt to give directions to superintendents, nurses and doctors as they do to the superintendents of schools, principals and the teachers, we can easily imagine the resulting chaos. Yet the mismanagement which would take place in the case of a hospital would be no greater than often takes place today in the management of some of our school systems. In the case of the hospital the results are visible, and easily brot within the comprehension of the people; in the case of a school system they are more concealed, and not so easily brot within the understanding of the electorate."

To prevent mismanagement, to insure intelligent coöperation between teachers and school boards, to make use of the experience of the teachers for the benefit of the children, and to protect the teachers against possible injustice, let us by all means have teachers on boards of education.

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This paper is striving to do its part
in the creation of a real profession of
teaching, the members of which shall
be self-respecting and respected, thru
stimulating clear thinking on the work
and the social position of teachers, and
thru intelligent criticism of systems of
educational administration. No greater
service than this could be rendered to
the children of the state.

WHO OWNS THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

MR. CHARLES FFRENCH was nominat-
ed for the Chicago School board by
Mayor Thompson. Mr. Ffrench an-
nounced his opposition to the rule adopt-
ed by the board early in the fall, for-
bidding to teachers membership in the
Teachers' Federation. In the short time

between the nomination and the ap-
proval by the Council, there was a great
deal of discussion, in the course of which
Mr. Ffrench felt called upon to issue a
statement. In his letter occurs this sig-
nificant passage:

*I was also informed that the Illinois
Manufacturers' Association was a very
strong body—had a very considerable
power with the city council and that
those in agreement with it would be as-
sisted while those against it would be
fought.*

It is time for teachers to ask them-
selves for whom they are working.

WHERE CARE IS NEEDED

AS AN ARGUMENT against a large lay
board of education consisting of "law-
yers, merchants, paint-manufacturers,
plumbers, etc.," Controller Prendergast
of New York City, the friend of econ-
omy at any price, remarks that these
members are all overworked, and that it
cannot be expected that overworked men
are able to give their best attention to
the board's affairs. "In view of the fact,"
he is quoted as saying, "that they have
\$40,000,000 to expend, it behooves the
city to see that it is dispensed carefully."

But the kind of work that can be ac-
complished by overworked teachers
would seem to be good enough for the
750,000 children of the city. Mr. Pren-
dergast did *not* say, as reported in the
newspapers, "In view of the fact that
none but the best education is good
enough for our children, it behooves the
city to see that we get the best available
teachers and provide the most favorable
condition for their work, whatever the
cost."

The following report from one of the
Controller's public addresses is signifi-
cant:

In speaking of the Gary plan the Con-
troller said that he

would not concede to the teachers
of the public schools the right to decide
whether or not the plan was advisable.
The teachers were merely hired by the city
to do the work of teaching and they had
no more right to say how that teaching
was to be done than the clerks in the finance
department had to say at what rate of

interest the city's money should be handled.

The Controller is no doubt clear in his own mind as to the relation between hirelings and those who hire them. He would not say that the city hires him for a particular job and that his judgment in financial matters is worthless; he is not in the position of a hireling. It is true that some people are hired to "do the work" while others are hired to do something different. It is also true that the teachers of New York have not, for the most part, shown either the desire or the capacity for greater responsibility than the "authorities" have been willing to concede to them. If our judgment is not sought, it may be that our judgment is really worthless.

The other side of the shield appears when the "authorities" begin to talk "economy." Then it is evident that their notion of running schools is borrowed directly from the office of the tired—overworked businessman. There it is customary to hire cheap hands to do what they are told and to keep their mouths closed. Excepting only the fact that in the course of her work the teacher has occasion to say a great deal, the same principle applies to the running of schools. Cheap hands "merely hired to do the work," with a few experts to determine policies, formulate regulations, enforce the rules.

Many teachers will no doubt resent the Controller's contemptuous attitude. But until they are prepared to take into their own hands their full share of responsibility for the conduct of educational affairs they will be obliged on the one hand, to compete with cheap hands who are good enough to fill school vacancies as they arise, and on the other hand, to submit to the arrogance and insolence of the "superior" officers and officials.

MR. TAFT DEMURS

IT'S A KEEN PLEASURE to record William Howard Taft, sometime president of these incomparable United States. A gentleman with so many hobbies is a very engaging dilettante, indeed. Woman Suffrage, Socialism, recall of judges

—not an intelligent movement but may boast of beloved William's genial opposition. His newest pastime is Education. We remember with awe the words of eminent wisdom wafted from Polonius to Laertes. Not without a hushed respect do we recall the equally judicious sentences of old Adam moralizing young Orlando in the enchanted forest of Arden. What diction of veneration shall we fitly wreath about the hallowed phrases of Howard Taft pleading with an infant nation?

"Mr. Taft deplores the shallowness of American primary education," barks *The New York Times*, the lusty Cerberus of the newspaper world. "*A school is not—or should not be—a republic*," he wisely says. "Here are children between six and fourteen. They should be made to obey, learn to 'mind.' Do they?" In a triumphant shout of distraction, Cerberus, echoing its Master, howls, "We like to think of those 'old world' lads and lasses of Colonial days who used to courtesy, 'make a leg' before their pastors and schoolmasters. Respect for age, where has it gone?"

The shallowness of our primary education isn't half as deplorable as is Mr. Taft's shallow insight into the situation under discussion. Any attempt to adapt the school curriculum to the manifold aspects of our rapidly changing civilization must, in the near view, appear to be a superficial adjustment. Only those intimately responsible mentors whose interest in human expansion brings them close to the heart of educational effort can realize how alert and sensible and enthusiastically bright our young pupils are. We measure progress by a matching of tasks against offsetting difficulties. Viewed thus fairly, can our primary school education be called a failure because some children, like Robert Louis Stevenson, refuse to spell well, while others, like Poincare, cannot add with speed and accuracy? Puerile assertions!

Shall children "be made" to obey? What does the accuser mean by his pet phrase? If the human relationship evoked by mutual interest and coöperative striving is capable of enlisting loy-

alty and obedience, of course pupils will "be made to mind." If the gentleman refers to corporal discipline or vindictive pedagogy or retaliative measures, he's a hopeless barbarian.

If our American Bourbons—creators of an intellectual Bourbonic plague being infectiously spread by the Tafts and Roots and Butlers of well-known fame—enjoy the curtsies and buxom bowings and exquisite kow-towings of Colonial days, who shall coldly say them nay? Let their joy be unconfined. But, the impertinence which asks us to reintroduce Master-Servant manners into our democratically-inclined school system is hopelessly askew. Professor Taft brazenly hints that a republican form of government is really out of place—a demoralizing freedom in a public school. Would that reactionary statesman have us prussianize our youth? Has he lost all sense of humor? Or is he confident of the ultimate defeat of social democracy in America—provided our public schools become authorized traffickers in flunkeyism?

We should love to learn the opinion of our fellow-teachers on these momentous derisions of the democracy enunciated by our jovial president!

PEDAGOGIC MAXIMS

Spare the blackboard and spoil the lesson.

Trifles make a model lesson; but a model lesson is no trifle.

Do not avoid obstacles; for the wise teacher makes a stepping stone out of every stumbling block.

Do not discuss the value of \$10,000 educational experts; for upon the digestion of the \$720 teacher depends the welfare of the children.

STEPHEN WRIGHT.

THE LIVING OR THE DEAD

WHY DO MANY of our brightest boys and girls drop out of school all along the line to go to work? Largely, I think, because they realize that at school they are kept at play, at make-believe. There is an atmosphere of artificiality about it all that is most repellent to the spirit of earnest youth. The problems set before them are not real problems, they are pretend problems. In my school days they used to be called, more honestly it seems to me, "examples." For in a real problem the answer is known to nobody. But all these things ending in question marks and marked "problems"—the answers to them are to be found in the teacher's head or in the key hidden in his desk. If the student buys a second hand arithmetic he may find the answers all neatly penciled in. At any rate the "?" is a lie. Nobody really wants to know what is ostensibly asked for, least of all the teacher who asks for it.

Of course the student can and does learn arithmetic from working over these old examples and of course the source book [in history] with its carefully selected documents and its skilfully contrived questions is useful. But the student using such methods feels their artificiality just as the student in masonry who builds a chimney in the middle of the shoproom floor to be taken down by the janitor after he has gone. How much better to give the student in history a chance to grapple with real problems, snatched alive and kicking from the stream of time?—DR. EDWIN E. SLOSSON, from an address on *Journalism as an Aid to History Teaching*, delivered at Rochester, N. Y., Nov. 23, 1915, at the annual meeting of N. Y. State Teachers' Association, published in *American Education*, December.

It is just as much the duty of a teacher to read an educational journal as it is to prepare for an examination. The difference is that we are driven to the one, while the other only beckons to us.—*The Educational Exchange*, December, 1915.

SIDETALKS WITH SUPERINTENDENTS—IX

ON THE MATTER OF QUALIFICATIONS

J S

BEING STIMULATED by a neat little satire on the topic of "My Favorite Principal" which a facile correspondent of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER* has written and shown to me, I have been thinking over the situation created by the existence of certain types of principals found in the school system. And I think I can read their doom.

But not being misled by the mock sincerity of the sketch (which I hope to goodness will get into the same number with this), you and I, judging, and having been judged to be, of Superior Merit, altho at some pains—we know that the soft-footed, self-centered, and non-committal principal, and his white-vested brother so cleverly visualized in Lieberman's story in the December number of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER*, are doomed to disappearance thru very ridicule. Neither they nor others of similar vulnerability, such as the loud-mouthed, bull-headed tyrants, cowards at heart, and their comrades, the cheap and vulgar philanderers, none of them can maintain his hold when the honest disgust of unmanacled teachers begins to be expressed. Don't overlook the fact that the expression is already beginning.

No superintendent whom I ever met has seemed to care much for destructive criticism, and I cannot hope to have you appreciate it now. But how, may I ask, are we to have decent principals until we have killed off many of those who hold the forts at present? The killing itself offers a first-class stimulus to constructive thinking, for in the act of selecting for slaughter we are obliged to discriminate. Qualities that are socially good tend to protect the possessor, and the more socially good qualities a principal has the longer his official life is likely to be. However, after we have past the apprentice stage of intellectual and professional development we are in a position to express constructively just

what we think a principal ought to be like.

Of course, I can hear you saying, "Come now, Smith, tell us what *you* think a principal ought to be like, and be careful that you don't describe yourself." But my answer to your official banter is that my ideal principal is not a personal replica, who might easily be no man at all, but he is derived by a method of which you may not know the A, B, C. That is the method of expressing specific needs in education in terms of society's requirements for progress.

To elucidate, since I do not desire to confuse or embarrass you: The schools ought to have principals who can show definite and profound understanding of the way of progress thru the work of education, and the schools ought not to be burdened with principals who are appointed because of their chumminess with, or usefulness to, the appointing power, or because of the possession of executive ability of the kind that is effective chiefly in manipulating or having others manipulate mechanical devices. A principal who understands the bearing of education upon social progress will naturally know several things specifically. He will be acquainted with the factors in the environment of man which help or hinder social progress, and he will necessarily have the vision to see and lead in the determination of what the schools ought to be doing to eliminate the hindering factors and to aid the helping ones.

Since the social-minded principal knows what ought to be done, he must of necessity have the courage to hold his banner high and to lead the movement of which his insight tells him the school forms a dynamic element. To do the leading this man, or woman either, must be free from all the innumerable trifling restraints existing in a hide-bound bureaucracy. The sole consideration in the administration of his high office should be the ultimate social progress of the school group. In order to approach this end, the desirability of which none of you would deny, the principal should have certain qualifications. And many

of the qualifications that you would mention, I also would mention.

To be sure we want principals who are strong in administration, who are as morally clean as possible, who understand the psychology of the child mind, who are specialists in some branch of learning, who have complete self-control, who are well-dressed, well-mannered, kind and considerate but firm, cordial and friendly but properly reserved on occasion—and all the rest. Of course, you must agree that the difference between the man who would meet these qualifications and stop there, and him who would go on, is the difference between an offensive educational prig and a man who grasps in his intellect the real problems of social life, and stirs to vital activity the latent, unused forces in the school organization itself.

Now, of course, you and I know it would be impossible to find enough paragons of this kind to go around; but let me call to your attention the fact that you and your autocratic system must have them, or your organization will go to pieces. In a democracy, however, or in that part of it which we conceive a school to be, potentially, a portion of this improbable tho desirable person could reside in one normal teacher, another portion in another, and so on. That person who in the judgment of his fellows, and of you, possessed the largest number of valuable qualities in ready form for effective use might be expected naturally to be chosen as the principal or executive officer of the school. In a school organized and managed on a democratic basis there would stand constantly before the entire school the superman's god-like qualities, his great abilities, his social vision, and his conception of social progress thru service—these would stand as *ideals* for ordinary mortals to work toward in a democracy.

As I look around, I am not surprised to see you of the caste of superintendent in our home City of Great Dimensions, wandering aimlessly far behind. I sincerely hope you may find a short cut to democracy. But at present your official actions so far as concerns the selection

of principals for that important branch of the school system, the high schools, mark a most discouraging stage of professional development. I have often wondered whether you really know what kind of principal you want. My reason for having this doubt is that there exists nowhere, so far as I know, any official statement of the necessary qualifications of a principal of high schools in the City of New York. I mean qualifications more significant and fundamental than mere scholarship and length of service in the system. Certainly, the periodic and numerous candidates for the vacancies do not appear to know of any document or circular of any kind that shows the basis upon which your choice of candidates is made. However, there are certain guide posts that have been put up by Bitter Experience on the Road to Preference; about these candidates do know.

For example, there is a sign which reads, "*Stop!* Don't think, for if you think you must speak; and if you speak in criticism of superiors and their policies, you are a dead one!" Another sign warns, "*Look!* And consider the ones who have reached the goal. They stood for nothing vital when they were teachers; they were tactful. Go slow!" A third sign advises, "*Listen!* In fact, keep your ear to the ground, for none ever pass this turn who are without friends among the owners of the road. At least, you must be wise to the ways of reaching the owners thru friends of their friends."

Now, master superintendents, you know perfectly well that in order to keep your system in existence you have to pick the men upon whom you can rely to obey, and to do no independent thinking. And now you know that I know it; and so is it known to all the timid rabbit-men who form the Order of Candidacy—an order the creed of which is never to "knock," but always to play the game. When I tell you this I am in reality preparing for your own eyes the Writing on the Wall.

Have you renewed your subscription? If not, **DO IT NOW!**

What They Say

Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

I picked up a copy of THE AMERICAN TEACHER, September number, in the office of the Chicago Teachers' Federation. I read the first page and was pleased, the second article on "Teachers and Politics" and marveled. I finished the magazine before I laid it down. At last I have found a teachers' publication which is not mush and milk. * * * Long life and success to THE AMERICAN TEACHER.

WILMA RHINESMITH.

Chicago.

MY FAVORITE PRINCIPAL

OUR SUPERIORS, so long underrated and strenuously maligned, will rejoice (I trust) at the homely confession of one humble teacher. I share none of the crack-brained delusions of my iconoclast colleagues. Faith and respect are the cardinal virtues of my creed. Toward official superiors my admiration freely flows. I hate secession. I abominate dissension. I loathe a house divided against itself. I welcome harmony. I love peace. Need I add more prelude to my lyric of genuine affection for my favorite principal?

If my confessional be read with cynic malice and kill-joy derision, I shall have exhorted to mutual understanding in vain. My confidence lies in the unsophisticated teacher. May she divine my inner meaning.

My principal walks softly. What a relief it is after the familiar shut-to of tumultuous doors and the crack-down of vociferous desks, to be confronted, vis-a-vis, in a breathless jiffy, by your superior. How he does tiptoe into my room, stealthily, considerately, shyly, as cautious as a youthful bridegroom on the morning of his coronation. Suspicious "nastys" say that noiseless approach is a premeditated Maxim silencer. He is prepared to fire, unseen and unheard. They say he walks like a Pinkerton. But I don't believe it. I'm sure he simply desires to save my overwrought nerves.

I can muster more evidence in favor of my belief. Wouldn't a truly con-

siderate principal discourage the discussion of any of those "modern" topics which breed dissension and misunderstanding? Just think how unruly and disquieting our school might be if our principal were a propagandist or anything equally violent? It's a delight to be a subordinate in his school. He asks only obedience and respect. Like the true gentleman that he is, he permits you to believe personally and privately whatever doctrines you please to cherish. He gets along so beautifully with all of us, too. Isn't it wonderful to be linked with so tactful a superior in the great work of education? I can never cease admiring him for his self-abnegation. He is perfectly non-committal. Would you believe it—there isn't a teacher in our school who knows exactly what he believes! I wish all principals could emulate his fine example. Then we might all enjoy the peace that passeth understanding. Do you appreciate now why I love my favorite principal?

Once I begin biographing *him*, I am not genius enough to know when to stop. I confess for the hundredth time to an overwhelming regard for his tender-mindedness. Tho I have had the honor of serving under his principality for five years, he has never even so much as breathed a criticism of my work. I go my even way and he walks his. His faith in his teachers is so complete, he neither knows what activity is absorbing the attention of teacher and pupils, nor does he care. Provided there is no distressing crisis or untoward hitch in the prevailing routine—his aesthetic temperament is so easily shocked—my principal is the very prince of peace. Can you imagine a more perfect gentleman? He walks softly, he prevents noisy debates, he never gives any suggestions to his teachers, he attends to purely superior functions, he encourages respect and obedience among subordinates. The reign of peace at my school is a tonic to the tender-minded teachers. When in the near future our superiors call for volunteers for additional service, you may be quite sure of our loyalty to those

who make life so pleasant for the faithful.

CHARLOTTE BUNCOMBELY.

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

JUST WHAT did President Wilson mean when he told us, in his Message to Congress, that when young men enlist they do so for the benefit of the employers?

Did he think that only employers and their hirelings would read the message?

Or has he become so habituated to the idea that he no longer realizes the enormity, the brutality of it?

Or is this but a schoolmasterly way of warning the lingering remnants of American democracy that the game is up?

The other schoolmasters and the schoolma'ams of the land ought to give serious consideration to this remarkable passage. Whatever Mr. Wilson meant, the writing of this passage into the annual message and its publication broadcast will be looked upon, in years to come, as a most eloquent sign of the times. Think it over.

STRATEGIC RETREAT

IN ADOPTING a new set of rules concerning the hiring and firing of professors, instructors and other more or less professional members of their staff, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania have handsomely vindicated Scott Nearing. They have also saved themselves from further persecution at the hands of the Professors' Union, Associated Alumni, Federation of Freemen, Liberal League and agitators for democracy in America. Those who tremble for Privilege and Property will hope that this is but a strategic retreat, for the purpose of gathering strength for another advance. Those who are more concerned with human lives will rejoice.

If you have enlisted for the war, and are tunneling under the fortresses of educational standpatism, don't waste time worrying about counter-mines.

AUTHORITY FROM THE MAN

AT THE MEETING of the New York State Teachers' Association held at Rochester, November 22-24, two contradictory points of view on faculty psychology were expressed, one by an ex-President of the United States, the other by a trained scholar and psychologist of established reputation.

From the first the teachers heard what they had learned years before that "between six and fourteen, the memories [of children] are capable of wonderful discipline. They can be given the power of committing to memory with the utmost ease, by requiring them to work constantly this faculty of their minds. As they grow older, such training of the memory is more and more difficult."

From the other they heard what they may not have learned before that "memory is an inborn trait, perhaps incapable of much improvement."

The authority of the ex-President will of course go far, since his address has been published widely. The authority of experimental evidence will have to wait, but science is used to that, and is patient.

NECESSITY

William Pitt, in a famous speech, said that "Necessity is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves." We wish neither to encourage tyrants nor to breed slaves. With a full sense of responsibility, therefore, we warn teachers that in the name of necessity attempts may be made to whittle away our hard-won liberties. One of the most precious of these is the freedom from compulsory duties after school hours. We hope that each head and assistant teacher will resist the plausible temptation to sacrifice essential rights for "the war period only," and to stand against after-school hours service as

"A champion cased in adamant."
There is no need for it, and it is a device of the enemy.—The London Teacher, December 3, 1915.

A WORD TO THE WISE SHOULD SUFFICE

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Never in the history of our Magazine has there been such genuine opportunity for service.

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Help us to create a social destiny for Teachers and Pupils.

SAM SCHMALHAUSEN,

Circulation Manager.